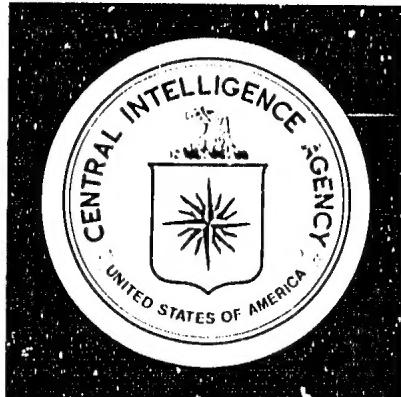


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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

*Developments in Indochina*

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DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA*(Information as of 1500)*

## SOUTH VIETNAM

The government has thwarted Communist plans for renewed attacks in some areas of the northern provinces. The Lower House has approved the Senate elections bill.

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## CAMBODIA

Communist military activity has picked up in the Phnom Penh area.

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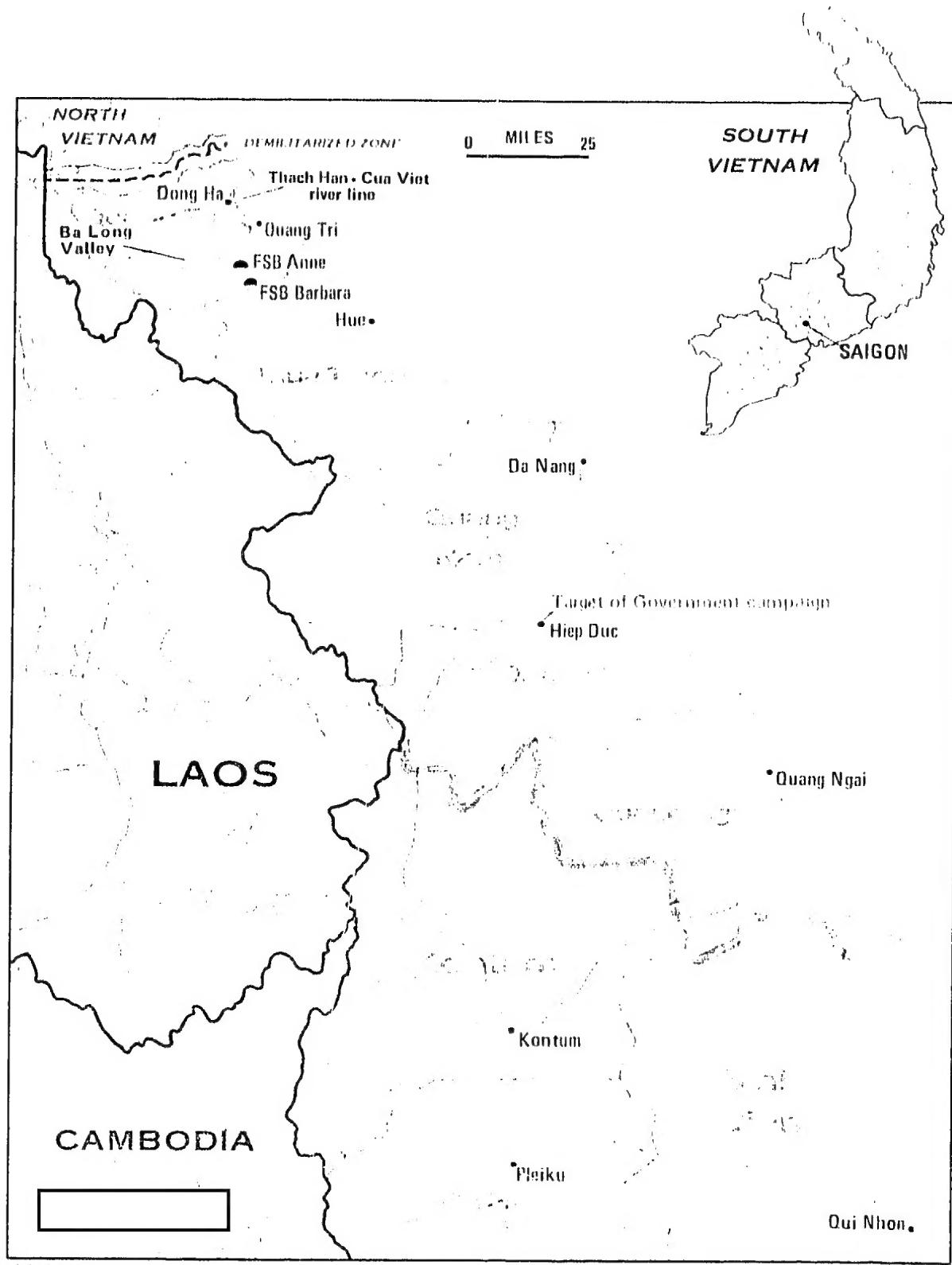
## LAOS

The Communists are using their big 130-mm. guns against Long Tieng; they have also started construction on a new road to Pha Dong, south of the Plaines des Jarres.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

The government's increasingly ambitious effort to regain territory in the northern half of the country apparently has upset Communist plans for renewed attacks in some other areas. The Communists have been forced to shelve plans for operations in the coastal lowlands as a result of one recently initiated South Vietnamese campaign to recapture the Hiep Duc District capital in Quang Tin Province. According to recently captured prisoners, all three regiments of a North Vietnamese division that were to carry out the attacks have been diverted to the defense of Hiep Duc and nearby logistic facilities that constitute an important support base for any main force action in the lowlands.

Similar moves by government forces toward enemy support and troop assembly points in Quang Tri Province may also be keeping Communist planners off balance. South Vietnamese success in retaking much of the ground around FSBs Anne and Barbara, for example, apparently prompted the Communists to shift major elements of a North Vietnamese division targeted against the western approaches to Hue, to central Quang Tri - Thua Thien provinces where they could bolster enemy defenses backed up against the foothills.

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The Communists have sufficient forces to contain a major South Vietnamese push north across the river or to mount a substantial campaign of their own. But recent gains by South Vietnamese ranger and paratroop elements north and west of FSB Anne have put the government within striking distance of a primary enemy support base in the Ba Long Valley. With the need to protect their positions in the foothills and at the same time man some 25 miles of defenses along the river (itself a relatively formidable barrier to a Communist move south), the Communists may be hard pressed to orchestrate a major campaign in the northern provinces at this time.

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More on the Enemy's Campaign in the South

A recent rallier in Phuoc Long Province north of Saigon has said that the Communists plan to attack and occupy the provincial capital of Song Be during the present dry season. The rallier claimed that the attack would be supported by armor, but provided no other details. Phuoc Long Province was largely bypassed during the Communist campaign last year, but not until last week did the first government military convoy in over a year reach the provincial capital. At present, the Communists are not believed to have much more than two regiments within striking distance of the capital. Additional forces from An Loc or from nearby Cambodia probably could be moved quickly into the area, however.

In the delta, the Communists are keeping up their light shellings of provincial and district towns, along with selective assassination and harassment of hamlet officials. Such actions suggest that the Communists hope to maintain pressure against population centers.

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Senate Election Bill

The Lower House has approved the government's bill regulating the Senate elections, which are slated for next August. The bill provides for the

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election of two slates of 15 candidates each (plus one alternate on the slate receiving the most votes to fill the 31 seats at stake in the 60-seat Upper House). The opposition tried but failed to amend a provision requiring each party to post a substantial "performance bond," which would be forfeited if the slate fails to obtain 20 percent of the vote.

Opposition deputies took the occasion to denounce the decree on political parties. The bill now goes to the Senate where opposition forces are stronger. Thieu's critics there may well seize on the election bill debate to accuse the President of confining the election to two slates in order to monopolize the contest for his Democracy Party. In the 1970 Senate elections, three ten-man lists of relatively broad coalitions or factions were elected. [redacted]

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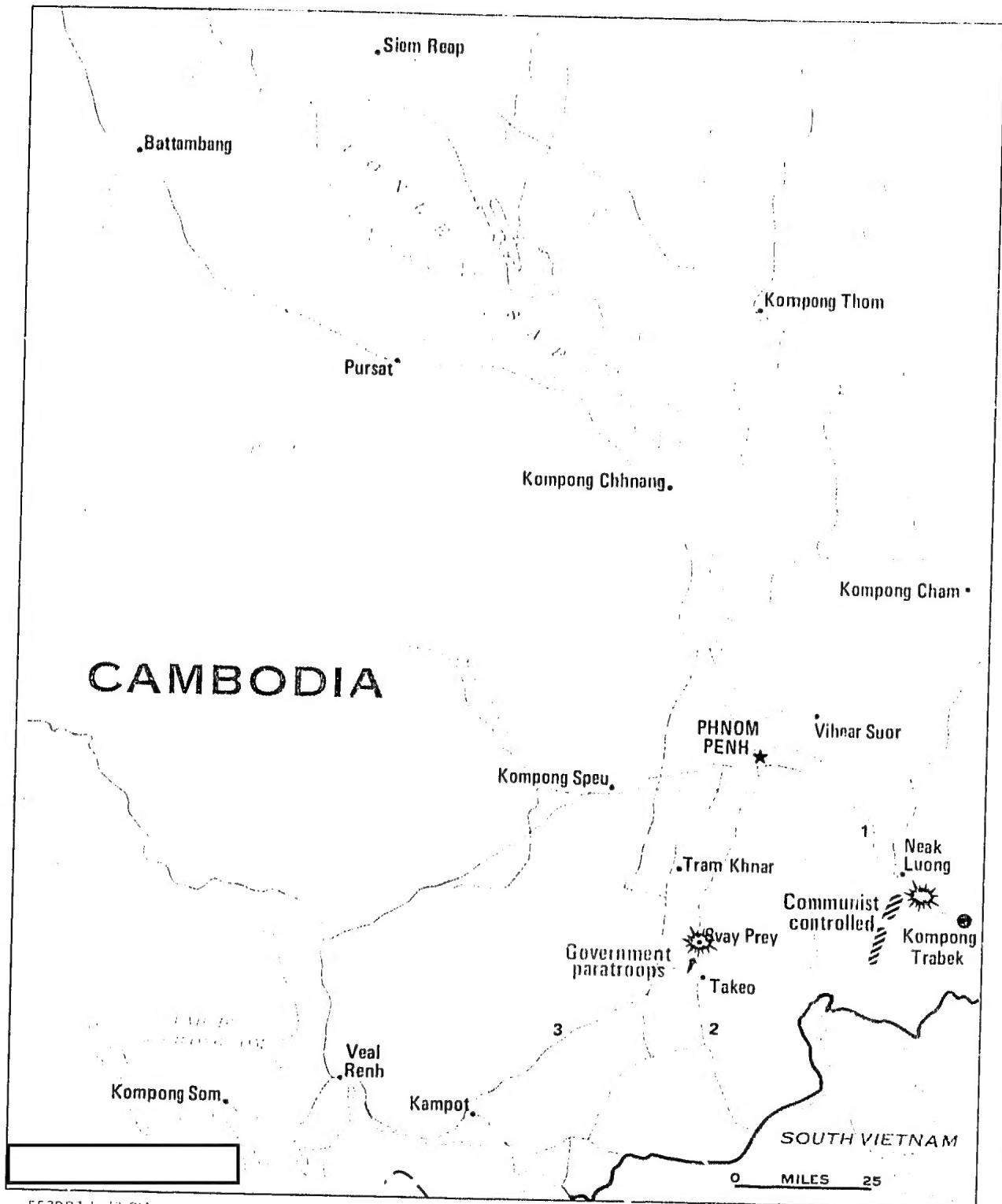
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◎ Communist-held location  
☀ Communist attack

CAMBODIA

The level of Communist military activity in the Phnom Penh area is increasing. Khmer Communist forces on 10 January attacked four battalion-sized Cambodian positions on Route 1, a few miles east of the government's Mekong River base at Neak Luong. The government units were forced to fall back toward Neak Luong. On the same day, the insurgents--with some possible support from elements of the North Vietnamese 96th Artillery Regiment--shelled Neak Luong and its airfield. The Communists also hit at least three other government positions on the Mekong's east bank below Neak Luong. At last report, one of three positions had been abandoned.

These are the most significant attacks in this sector since last October, when the Communists thwarted government efforts to move eastward along Route 1 toward the town of Kompong Trabek. Like the recent insurgent attacks farther north around Vihear Suor, these moves probably are designed to keep the Cambodians well away from nearby Communist supply lines that extend into South Vietnam. At the same time, they also serve to increase the threat to the vital supply convoys from South Vietnam that move up the Mekong to Phnom Penh.

South of Phnom Penh, the government reinforcements that arrived in Tram Khnar on Route 3 earlier in the week have launched clearing operations just southwest of that village. To the east, three Cambodian paratroop battalions have moved up Route 2 from the town of Takeo to within a few miles of the government position at Svay Prey, which has been under steady Communist pressure for almost a week. Other government forces reportedly have completed their clearing operations on Route 2 between Takeo and the South Vietnam border, and that portion of the highway is again open.

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Within the capital itself, Communist terrorists on 11 January used some sort of small rocket device to fire three rounds at the National Assembly building. Although the assembly was in session, no deputies were injured and preliminary reports indicate that physical damage to the building was light.

Sabotage at Kompong Som

A US freighter unloading US military aid supplies and rice at the seaport of Kompong Som was damaged on 11 January by two explosive charges attached by Communist saboteurs. No casualties were reported, but approximately 1,000 tons of rice were ruined by flooding in the ship's lower hold. Repairs to the vessel should be completed within a few days. There have been only a few such incidents at the port since the beginning of the war.

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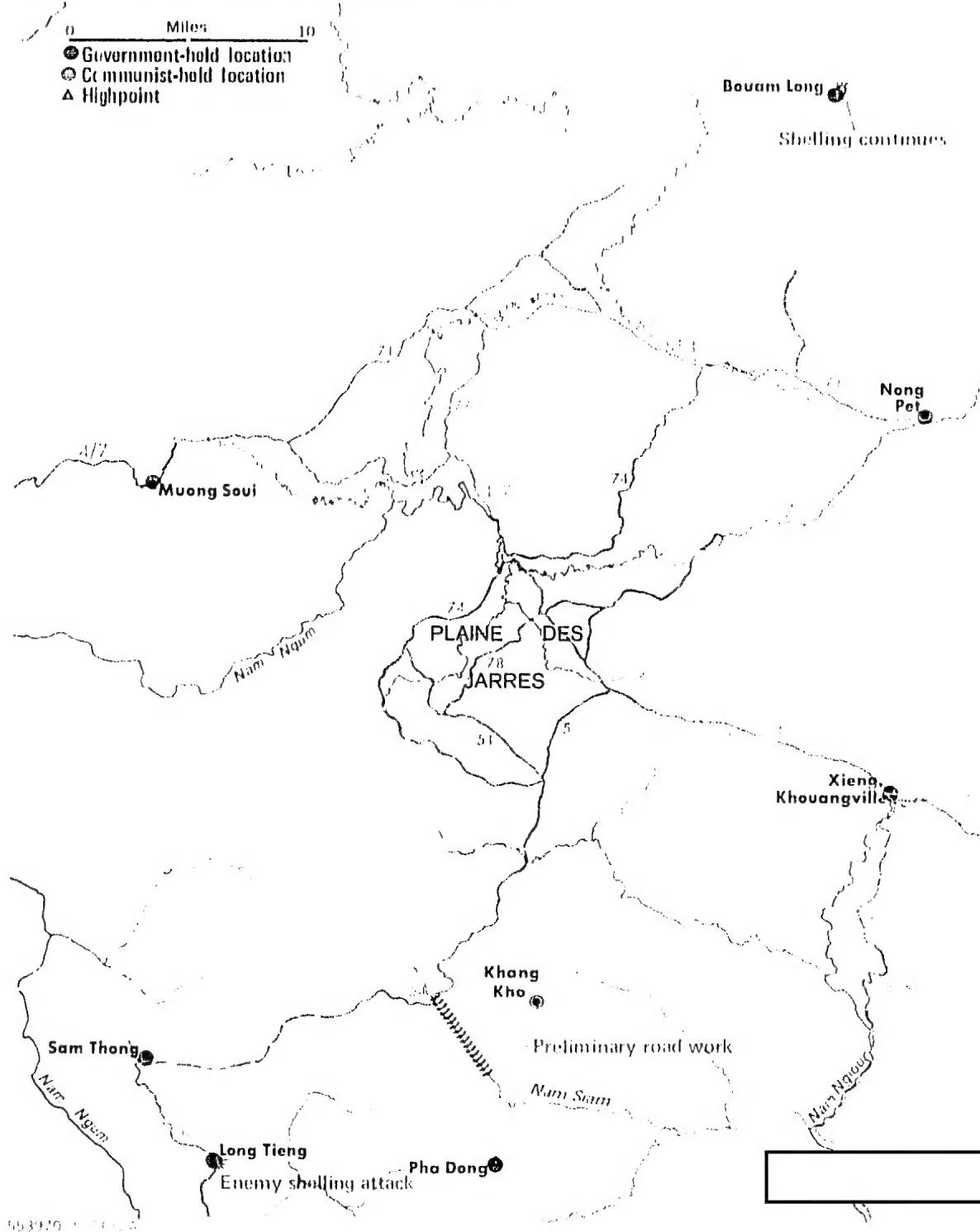
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LAOS: PLAINE DES JARRES AREA



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LAOS

Communist gunners fired a 50-round barrage from their 130-mm. guns into Long Tieng on 10 January, but caused only a few casualties among the irregulars. This was the second time this dry season that the heavy guns have been used against Vang Pao's base. To the north, sporadic artillery fire continued to hit defenses around Bouam Long on 9 and 10 January but little significant ground action was reported.

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A Road to Pha Dong

The Communists have begun work on a road toward the government base at Pha Dong, south of the Plaine des Jarres. Field analysis of photography reveals that vegetation has been cleared along a four-mile stretch of the Nam Siam Valley leading toward Pha Dong, Vang Pao's primary staging base for forays against the southern Plaine. The clearing extends to within three miles of the base. Further work will be necessary before trucks can use the track.

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Last dry season, North Vietnamese construction crews pushed a road southwest from the Plaine to Sam Thong and then used it to move armor and supplies forward to support their siege of Long Tieng. The clearing along the Nam Siam may presage a similar move against Pha Dong later this year.

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